

George Vecsey

Sponsor Plans
Boomerang

It is hard to tell which is more of a surprise: that the United States actually has a team going to the World Cup of boomerang competition, or that the United States team is actually sponsored by the forces of good health.

But both are true. Three Americans are leaving early next week to compete with six other nations in the World Cup of boomerang, to be held in — roight, mate, you guessed it — Australia.

Much of their modest funding comes from a Houston-based group called DOC (Doctors Ought to Care), which warns of the dangers of smoking. The United States competitors say they turned down a \$12,000 offer from a tobacco company on principle.

"I'm asthmatic," said Eric Darnell, one of the American boomerangers. "I get off an airplane feeling totally polluted. I couldn't see wearing the logo of a cigarette company."

Much of the big money in sports these days comes from products that can ruin your liver, your lungs or your teeth. Athletes compete with logos on their uniforms, or perform with giant beer, cigarette and soda advertisements looming over them.

The message to spectators is clear: sit on your foam cushion, watch somebody else sweat, and use the sponsor's product, which will leave you in worse shape than when you began.

You couldn't even call it insidious. A recovering alcoholic, struggling day by day to maintain his sobriety, could whack a home run, and the huckster in the broadcasting booth would shriek, "Hey, —, this Bud's for you."

Or an outfielder with a parent stricken with cigarette-related emphysema could make a catch in front of a giant cigarette advertisement. With American soccer in the malodorous embrace of a cigarette firm, one can only dread the bombardment of youthful soccer players if the United States is awarded the 1994 World Cup.

BUT the most immediate World Cup is the first one for the boomerang, to be held in a corner of New South Wales called Barrooga.

Wearing an emblem with two no-smoking logos superimposed on a boomerang, three Americans — Darnell, Chet Snouffer and Barnaby Ruhe — will compete on May 8, 11 and 14 against teams from West Germany, France, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Japan and the host country.

"Boomeranging, pardon the expression, is taking off," said Darnell, who has been the Johnny Appleseed of the sport in this country.

Competition will be in six events: maximum time aloft, fast catch, Aussie round (five throws

with varying wind), accuracy, consecutive catches of increasing difficulty and team relays.

"Our sport needs lung power," said Darnell. "To be sponsored by cigarettes would seem to be a contradiction in terms."

As a child, fascinated by the wind, Darnell made gliders and then boomerangs out of wood. (Now they are all made of polypropylene, which is more malleable.) Darnell later teamed up with Benjamin Ruhe, the uncle of his current teammate, to write a book, "Boomerang: How to Throw, Catch and Make Them," which has sold over 100,000 copies. At 43, he is ranked second to Snouffer in American competition.

While Australian aborigines "kept it alive for 10,000 years," Darnell notes, other weapons and toys of a boomerang's curved shape have been found in excavations in Egypt, Poland, the Netherlands, Florida and Arizona.

"The first time I went to Australia, I was surprised to see all the throwers are of British descent," Darnell said. "My biggest fantasy is to throw a glow-in-the-dark boomerang from the top of Ayers Rock, near Alice Springs, which is a sacred place to the aborigines."

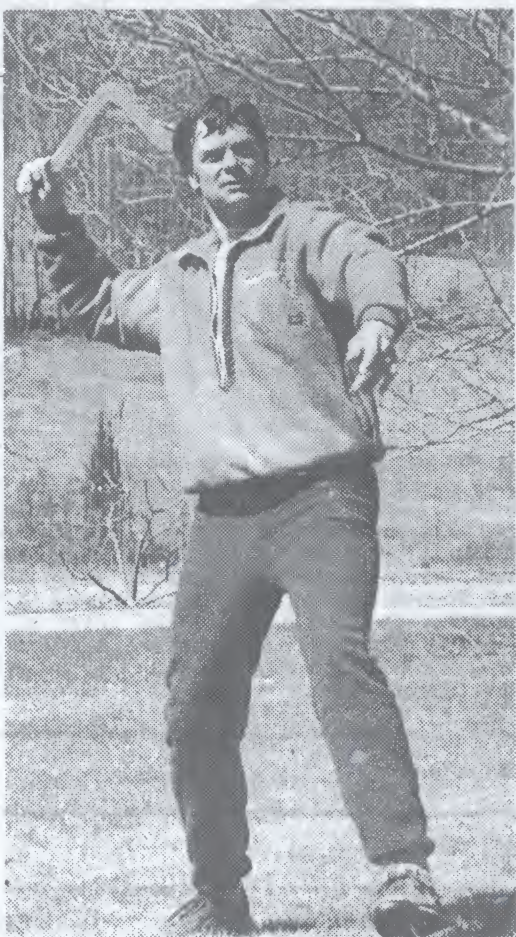
But first they will compete in the World Cup, sponsored by DOC rather than a cigarette company.

"Pelé is one of my heroes because I played high-school soccer," Darnell said. "It makes me sad to see him wearing T-shirts for a tobacco company. I detest the image of a baseball player standing on the field, spitting tobacco juice."

Needing a sponsor, Darnell was put in touch with Dr. Alan Blum, the coordinator of health promotion at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston. Dr. Blum had been the editor of the Medical Journal of Australia and the New York State Journal of Medicine.

WHEN he was based in his native Nassau County, Dr. Blum persuaded more than 7,000 doctors to pay between \$10-\$25 for annual dues to DOC for what he calls "pro-health, not anti-smoking" activities. Some members of DOC in Nebraska held a fund-raising Dead Man Chewing Tobacco Softball Tournament. Doctors in Houston and Georgia raised money with an Emphysema Slims Tennis Tournament.

"Why not have a counterbalance?" Dr. Blum asked. "The powerful pseudo-masculine connection between cigarettes and athletics has never been broken. Until recently, athletes could be in cigarette ads. Where is the redress for the damage they did?"



Eric Darnell, member of United States boomerang team, practicing in Strafford, Vt.

The news is not all bad. Airlines in the United States now ban smoking on flights of less than two hours. New York City has tough new rules against smoking, although with the awareness of city government, sports reporters continue to smoke in press boxes, another sign of the vicious grip of tobacco on the sports industry.

"Now the companies simply buy up the entire sport," Dr. Blum said. "Tractor pulls. Auto racing. Skiing. Pro golf. You've got one company sponsoring tennis tournaments with teen-age girls. You've got all-star ballots in basketball. You've got a sports calendar in The New York Times. One of these days you're going to see the Marlboro World Series or the Winston Super Bowl."

But not the United States boomerang team. After Darnell had inspired his teammates to turn down the potential cigarette sponsor, Dr. Blum tapped the treasury of DOC for \$2,000 for uniforms, and now he's working on the \$4,500 for the airline tickets, still needing \$6,000 for expenses.

The three athletes will still have to inhale recycled cigarette smoke in the so-called no-smoking section all the way to Australia. But at least they won't glorify the stuff while they compete.

'Nervous' Beman
Tees Off in Legends

By GORDON S. WHITE Jr.

Special to The New York Times

AUSTIN, Tex., April 28 — The most powerful man in the PGA Tour operation, Commissioner Deane Beman, was as nervous as a green rookie today when he topped his first tee shot in the opening round of the 11th annual Liberty Mutual Legends of Golf.

The ball bounced off the tee at the par-5 hole on Onion Creek Country Club and trickled about 135 yards out in the middle of the fairway.

One 13-handicap golfer in the gallery turned to a friend, a 20 handicapper, and said, "Looked worse than me on that one."

The friend said, "Yeah, more like me."

Settling Down

The commissioner, who turned 50 years old Friday and thus qualified for this better-ball, two-man team event, admitted, "I was a little shaky starting out."

Eventually, after something of a struggle over the first nine holes, Beman settled down and he and Al Geiberger came in with a better ball of three-under-par 67. That put them four shots behind the lead of 63 shared by two teams, Bobby Nichols and Butch Baird, and Bob Charles of New Zealand and Bruce Devlin of Australia.

This event has been split into young seniors and old seniors so the Nichols-Baird and Charles-Devlin teams led the 50-59 age group.

Roberto DeVincenzo of Argentina, who still hits a golf ball a long, long way at age 65, and Charlie Sifford, 64, also scored a better ball of 63 to hold the first-round lead in the old-timers group for 60 year olds and up. DeVincenzo eagled both the par-5 first hole and the par-5 18th.

Trails 2 Teams By 4 Shots

Geiberger completed that opening hole with Beman by getting a birdie for his team. In better ball, each player goes tee to cup and the lowest score of the two counts for the team score.

Erratic Front Nine

Beman holed out for the team better ball seven times during the round and played one-over-par for those seven holes with two bogeys, four pars and a birdie.

The commissioner was erratic on the front nine and missed the green at each of the three par-3 holes there. This course of 6,357 yards plays to par 70 with five par-3 holes and three par-5 holes. Beman actually only hit one par-3 green with a tee shot, the 17th, where he got one of his pars. His birdie came at the par-4 16th using a 9-iron approach and making a six-foot putt.

Beman drew some criticism from other players in the Legends, including Arnold Palmer, for taking part. They said he should be working as the commissioner and not as a fellow competitor.

But Beman, who won both the British and United States Amateur titles and four PGA Tour events before becoming commissioner in 1974, said, "I was disappointed with the criticism but I accept it."

Geiberger said, "Those who complained would complain about anything."

Indiana Protest on Knight

A group of Indiana University students has planned a demonstration Sunday evening to protest the recent remarks by Coach Bob Knight, in which he drew an analogy between dealing with stress and a response to rape.

"What we want is an apology, or something other than a 'No comment' response from him," said Sarah Mowell, a third-year law student. "We also want to encourage a stronger response from the administration."

Knight said during the nationally televised interview that he was not referring to the act of rape. Thomas Ehrlich, the university president, said the reference to rape and Knight's coarse language during the interview were "in very poor taste."

Jim Green, a spokesman for Dr. Ehrlich, said the president had spoken by telephone to Ralph Floyd, the athletic director, on Wednesday, and that Floyd had met with Knight.

Dr. Ehrlich was not on the Bloomington campus yesterday; Floyd and Knight did not return telephone calls to their offices.

Joyner-Kersee and Louganis Honored

By MICHAEL JANOWSKY

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 28 — Jackie Joyner-Kersee and Greg Louganis were honored today as the United States Olympic Committee's Sports-woman and Sportsman of the Year for 1987.

At a brief ceremony in the Executive Office Building, they were presented awards by Vice President Bush, who congratulated them and the 85 other athletes in 45 sports or sports organizations who were named as athletes of the year.

Joyner-Kersee, the world champion in heptathlon and long jump, became the first athlete to win the award in consecutive years. Louganis, a diver, won the award in 1982.

Both were medalists in the 1984

Chosen as Athletes of Year

Summer Olympics in Los Angeles. Joyner-Kersee won the silver medal in heptathlon; Louganis won gold medals in springboard and platform diving. Both are considered favorites to win their events in the Summer Games in Seoul, South Korea, in September.

Year of Achievement

Joyner-Kersee's selection was no surprise. Her 1987 season in track and field fairly glittered with outstanding achievements, foremost among them her performances at the Indianapolis Pan American Games

and the world championships in Rome. In Indianapolis, she tied Heike Drechsler's world record in the long jump, 24 feet 5½ inches. In Rome, she was the only American to win two gold medals, with victories in the heptathlon and the long jump. She won 20 of the 24 events in which she competed in 1987, including 10 of 11 long jumps.

"Winning the award makes me feel good," she said. "I had no idea I was going to win it."

Louganis fought back after early-season second-place finishes in the 1-meter, 3-meter and platform events

of the national indoor championships. It was the first time in 10 years he failed to win at least one event in a major tournament.

His comeback included sweeps of the same three events at the McDonald's Invitational, the United States Sports Festival and the Pan American Games.

The athletes' awards were part of the program on the U.S.O.C.'s annual House of Delegates meeting. Between now and Saturday, several issues will be decided, including which American city, Atlanta or Minneapolis-St. Paul, will bid for the 1996 Summer Games, whether a training facility will be built in San Diego, and whether ballroom dancing will become a competitive sport under U.S.O.C. auspices.

Breeders' Cup to Florida

Special to The New York Times

LEXINGTON, Ky., April 28 — The 1989 Breeders' Cup Day races will be run at either Hialeah Park or Gulfstream Park in Florida, rather than in New York or California, the Breeders' Cup board of directors announced here today.

The decision was made after cup officials listened to presentations last month by the owners of the two Florida tracks, and after Florida passed legislation allowing a special three-day fall meeting at either track. Calder Race Course, the Miami area's third track, is usually the one operating in November, when the Cup Day races are held, but is not being considered as a possible host.

This year's cup races will be held at Churchill Downs in Louisville, Ky., Nov. 5, the first time they have been staged outside of New York or California. The first cup races, in 1984, were held at Hollywood Park, and subsequent runnings were at Aqueduct, Santa Anita, and then Hollywood again last year. New York tracks had bid for next year's races and still hope they can get them in 1990.

Granacus Wins

Continued From Page B17

gress was scheduled to run in the Blue Grass and the Derby, but was withdrawn earlier this week because he has been in dull spirits since arriving in Kentucky.

'10 Lengths Better'

Granacus belongs to Steve Stavro, a 61-year-old owner of seven produce markets in Toronto, who purchased him at a Canadian yearling sale for about \$46,000. The colt lost his first seven starts, then won two of five races in Florida this winter, but was soundly beaten in three stakes tries.

"He's 10 lengths better now than he was last year," said Patrick Collins, he winner's trainer. "We'll go to the Derby. There's no question the whole crop of 3-year-olds is mediocre outside of Private Terms."

Collins was referring to the undebated winner of last week's Wood Memorial, who is expected to vie for derby favoritism with Winning Colors and the Woody Stephens-trained entry of Forty Niner and efis.

Vasquez called Granacus "as good as anybody now," but would not commit to riding him in the Derby because he is pursuing other possible mounts.

The Blue Grass was the next to the last of 25 graded races for 3-year-olds before the Derby. The last is the one-mile Derby Trial at Churchill Downs on Saturday, where Cefis and Kingpost are the favorites against Jim's Orbit, Frosty the Snowman, Morgan's Levey, Pastourelles, Lover's Trust and Velvet Fog.

Coach Favors Payment to Athletes

Special to The New York Times

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J., April 28 — College athletes should receive a monthly stipend and a full Pell Grant award in addition to athletic scholarships, according to Tom Osborne, the Nebraska football coach.

Osborne, who was at Giants Stadium today to promote the sixth annual Kickoff Classic game here between Nebraska and Texas A&M on Aug. 27, said he was not in favor of a bill recently introduced by the Nebraska Legislature that would allow Nebraska athletes to be paid. Osborne said however, that he is in favor of financial compensation for college athletes, at least in the major revenue-producing sports.

"I don't want to see state legislatures get involved," Osborne said. "If the state passes legislation because it doesn't like N.C.A.A. rules, we'll have chaos."

"I do feel that athletes should be paid a monthly allowance of \$50 to \$75, and that they should be eligible for a full \$2,100 Pell Grant, instead of the \$1,400 the N.C.A.A. allows. The question is whether you do it for all the athletes or just those in football and basketball. Nebraska has some 300 athletes on scholarship, so it would be a problem."

Osborne said that the remaining \$700 from a Pell Grant, a Federal award that is based on financial need, that doesn't go to the eligible athlete usually ends up in the university's athletic budget.

"Money the athlete should get is pocketed by the university," Osborne said. "We've asked more of the athlete recently in terms of an increased number of games, drug testing, off-season conditioning and academics, yet we do less for them."

Theater, anyone?

Check the Theater Directory for Broadway & Off-Broadway shows... every day in The New York Times.

PLAYOFF ACTION

TONIGHT AT 8:00PM ON MSG
NY KNICKS vs.
BOSTON CELTICS

Tune to MSG next week for more Knicks playoff coverage!

MSG/KNICKS PLAYOFF SCHEDULE

Game #3 — Wed., 5/4 at NY, 8:00PM
Following Knicks GameNight at 7:30PM

Game #4* — Fri., 5/6 at NY, 8:30PM
Following Knicks GameNight at 8:00PM

*If necessary.

MSG
MADISON SQUARE GARDEN NETWORK

We Bring The Garden Home!

A Gulf+Western Company

Check cable listings for channel. Schedule subject to change.
Call 1-800-OK-CABLE to get MSG Network.